

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

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TO OAU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
AM EMBASSY BONN PRIORITY 8768-69
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR ADDITION OF OAU POSTS)
E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 23

STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, FRED BROWN VOLUNTERED THE
FOLLOWING STATEMENT AT THE PRESS BRIEFING FEBRUARY 23:

YES. I HAVE A STATEMENT ON UGANDA. THE UNITED STATES
IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF MASSIVE
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN UGANDA, INCLUDING THE
RECENT REPORT OF THE VIOLENT DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF
UGANDA AND TWO CABINET MINISTERS.

WE ALSO HAVE NOTED WITH GREAT APPREHENSION NEW
REPORTS THAT RELIGIOUS AND SPECIFIC TRIBAL GROUPS ARE
BEING SUBJECTED TO SEVERE PERSECUTION. WE THINK THE
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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST PROMPTLY LOOK INTO SUCH
REPORTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WELCOME THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT IT WILL CALL FOR AN INVESTIGA-
TION OF THE SITUATION BY THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

THE COMMISSION IS NOW IN SESSION IN GENEVA. WE FULLY SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE AND WILL ACTIVELY WORK WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OTHER DELEGATIONS WITH THE AIM OF PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS IN UGANDA.

THE STATEMENT PROMPTED THE FOLLOWING Q AND A:

Q: AMONG OTHER THINGS RECENTLY, PRESIDENT AMIN APPARENTLY IS JUSTIFYING THIS CAMPAIGN ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A PLOT, BEHIND WHICH, AMONG OTHERS, IS THE UNITED STATES. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

A: SUCH ASSERTIONS ARE ABSURD.

Q: WAS YOUR STATEMENT CLEARED BY THE SECRETARY?

A: YES.

Q: WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, ARE YOU BASING YOUR STATEMENT SOLELY ON PRESS REPORTS OR DO YOU HAVE INDEPENDENT INFORMATION OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS -- ATROCITIES, MASSACRES, WHATEVER?

A: OUR INFORMATION COMES FROM NEWS REPORTS AND OTHER SOURCES, BUT I WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO IDENTIFY THE OTHER SOURCES. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WHEN WE SPEAK ON THE SUBJECT WE KNOW WHEREOF WE SPEAK.

Q: YES, I KNOW, BUT ONE OF THE THINGS I'M TRYING TO
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GET AT IS THERE ARE A VARIETY OF NEWS REPORTS. THERE ARE SOME COMING OUT OF TANZANIA, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TALK ABOUT THOUSANDS OF BODIES BEING FOUND I THINK IN THE UPPER NILE. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHICH OF THOSE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE. COULD YOU PROVIDE US SOME--

A: I CANNOT, BUT I CAN SAY THAT WE ARE CONFIDENT WHEN WE MAKE THIS STATEMENT WE DO SO ON THE BASIS OF SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE.

Q: BUT, YOUR CONFIDENCE, DOES THAT GO TO THE DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE MINISTERS? ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THEY WERE MURDERED AND DIDN'T DIE IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT OR SOMETHING?
I THINK I WILL JUST STAND ON THE WAY IT WAS CHARACTERIZED BY THE PRESIDENT WHEN HE OFFERED THE STATEMENT LAST SUNDAY AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT NATIONAL CATHEDRAL. WE NOTE THAT THIS CHARACTERIZATION HAS BEEN USED NOT

ONLY BY THE PRESIDENT BUT BY A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS.

Q: AMBASSADOR YOUNG TOLD CBS THAT HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT AMIN HAD PERSONALLY ORDERED THE MURDER OF THE ANGLICAN BISHOP -- ARCHBISHOP -- AND HE WENT ON TO SAY -- AND THIS IS A QUOTE -- "I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT AMIN HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR A LITERAL REIGN OF TERROR IN UGANDA. THE U.S. HAS NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH UGANDA."

A: I THINK WHAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG MEANT WAS THAT WE HAVE NO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN UGANDA.

Q: HAVE YOU APPRAISED HIM OF THE CORRECTION?

A: I DO NOT KNOW. I THINK THAT IS WHAT HE MEANT.

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Q: HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT CLARIFIED THIS OR ARE YOU CLARIFYING HIS REPORT?

A: I SAID YESTERDAY, BEFORE AMBASSADOR YOUNG MADE THIS STATEMENT THAT WE HAVE NO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

THERE IN KAMPALA--

Q: WELL, I KNOW WHAT YOU SAID, BUT APPARENTLY HE WASN'T AWARE OF THIS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE CORRECTING THE AMBASSADOR.

A: NO, I AM NOT. I THINK IT IS QUITE CLEAR WHAT THE SITUATION IS. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS DO EXIST, AND IT IS--

Q: WELL, ISN'T THAT A CORRECTIVE? I MEAN THE AMBASSADOR COULD BE WRONG, COULDN'T HE?

A: I AM NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF ISSUING CORRECTIVES. IT IS PERFECTLY CLEAR WHAT THE SITUATION IS; AND I THINK THAT IS WHAT HE MEANT TO SAY.

Q: DID YOU YESTERDAY GIVE THE BACKGROUND OF HOW LONG WE HAVEN'T HAD AN AMBASSADOR IN UGANDA?

A: '73.

Q: SINCE '73.

A: AMBASSADOR MELADY WAS THE MOST RECENT AMBASSADOR.

Q: AND WHY WAS HE BROUGHT HOME, DO YOU REMEMBER?

A: BECAUSE OF THE PATTERN OF VIOLENCE, VIOLATIONS OF
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE DISTURBING EVENTS THERE, AND WE
FELT THAT IT WAS NOT SAFE FOR US TO MAINTAIN OUR MISSION
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THERE.

Q: SO THERE'S NOBODY THERE NOW, RIGHT?

A: OUR INTERESTS ARE REPRESENTED BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY IN KAMPALA.

Q: IN ADDITION TO ISSUING THIS STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING
THE VIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION -- IS THERE
ANYTHING THE UNITED STATES CAN OR WOULD DO ABOUT THESE
ABUSES?

A: WE ARE CLOSELY MONITORING THE SITUATION THROUGH
THE FRG, OF COURSE, AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO SPECULATE
BEYOND -- OR SPECULATE WITH REGARD TO THE SITUATION.

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Message Attributes

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Subject: STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 23 STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, FRED BROWN VOLUNTERED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT AT THE PRESS BRIEFING FEBRUARY
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, SHUM, US, UG, (BROWN, FRED)
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